bricks. The cost of building the house in which we stayed in Tarim was $60,000. The exterior of these houses is decorated with blue, green, yellow, and pink, which is not at all unattractive. Interiors are fitted with every up-to-date contrivance, electric light and fans, telephones, ice-plants, and European modern conveniences in the bathrooms, wash-basins with running water and shower-baths. Whereas in Du'an and Shibam there is scarcely a chair to be found, these houses are replete with European furniture, albeit some of a rather florid style. Large and comfortable chairs and sofas decorate the drawing-rooms, and there are English carpets, masses of gilt mirrors, chandeliers and glass cupboards full of marmalade dishes, egg-cups and so on. Living in such houses as these one is struck at every moment with the reflection that there is hardly a thing in the house that has not had to be transported on camel-back over the mountains for six days.

The principal structural detail that the wealthy Seiyids of Tarim and Seiyun have to contend with in their building operations is the difficulty of procuring long enough timber. The *'elb* or *sidr* tree grows to no great height, and although we found *'ariata* trees (*Conocarpus erectus*, Jacq.) growing to 50 feet or more in height some days' journey down the Wadi Maseila, they cannot be transported by camels. The difficulty is being surmounted to some extent by experiments in the making of reinforced concrete pillars of which I saw two in construction at Seiyun. All the work is done by local labour, the travelled Seiyids training their masons. The interior walls of these houses, apart from elaborate decorations such as gold crowns and coloured flowers, are covered with a lime plaster polished with smooth pieces of flint till it resembles marble.

Shibam is remarkable for the height of its houses. The town, which is in the shape of a capital D, contains in a small area 500 houses built on a slight eminence in the Wadi. From a short distance the whole town appears to be one enormous brown mud built construction with a whitewashed top storey and roof. There is no further building room in the town and the only way to have a new house is to buy an old one, knock it down, and rebuild. By general consent, houses in Shibam are not now to be built more than six storeys high in order to avoid overlooking. The only important existing exception to this rule is the Government palace, which is a storey or two higher, but which is in such a position that it overlooks very little. On the top of the six storeys the builder may however erect a roofless seventh which gives him a walled-in roof terrace. The building of this type of house which, when completed, will be 64 *dhirras* or 96 feet high, will cost more than 20,000 dollars. Bigger houses are constructed of two or more houses built together. The life of a house is said to be 200 to 250 years, but the age it reaches depends on the privies being kept dry and cleaned out regularly. If this is not done, the damp saps the lower part of the clay walls and causes splits, necessitating demolition.

4: Ingrams G-3 (no date) 1935 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

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HOUSE BUILDING IN THE HADHRAMAUT

W. H. INGRAMS

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DURING a recent tour in the Hadhramaut my wife and I collected some notes on the building of houses. Each town in the country has its own individual characteristics. Although the houses of coastal towns are all of the familiar Arab type, built of stone rubble and whitewashed, there is a wide difference in the aspect of the towns themselves. Makalla, for example, is a miniature edition of Zanzibar—tall houses and narrow streets, sometimes not 6 feet across, while Shihr is a town of lower houses, wide streets, and open spaces.

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In the Wadi Do'an the tall mud-built houses climb up the banks of the wadi. They are close packed, but it is in their interiors that they merit attention. The colour scheme is black and white and rusty red. Although there is practically no whitewash on the outside of Do'an houses the interiors of the better-class dwellings are spotlessly white. The ceilings of the rooms, which are lofty, are supported by carved pillars of *'elb* [1] wood, and all interior woodwork is of this material. The doors are set in wide heavily carved frames and the whole ornamented extensively with iron nails, 2 inches across the heads, burnished with lead, which shine like polished dollars. It is a modern development of Do'an houses that every room in the house should be provided with its own ablution room, and as a consequence they are really self-contained flats. The entrance door gives on to a passage into the flat, and there is usually not a door into the main living room but a Moorish arch either in the whitewashed wall or of stained *'elb* wood again studded with burnished nails. The ceiling is held up on rafters of *'elb* wood supported by the pillars previously referred to, the mud floor of the next storey above being laid over slats of date wood very attractively arranged in herring-bone pattern.

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In Terim the principal feature is the large number of enormous dwelling-houses in a style copied from Malaya but built of mud bricks. The exterior of these houses is decorated with blue, green, yellow, and pink, which is not at all unattractive. Interiors are fitted with every up-to-date contrivance, electric light and fans, telephones, ice plants, and modern European conveniences in the bathrooms. Whereas in Do'an and Shibam there is scarcely a chair to be found these houses are replete with European furniture, albeit some of a rather florid style. Living in such houses as these one is struck at every moment with the reflection that there is hardly a thing in the house that has not had to be transported on camel back over the mountains for six days, and while I mention this it is worth recording that there are sixty cars in Terim itself, each of which has been transported in parts by twelve camels from the coast.

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The principal structural detail that the wealthy Seyyids of Terim and Seyyun have to contend with in their building operations is the difficulty of getting long enough timber. The *'elb* or *sidr* tree trows to no great height, and although we found *'ariata* trees growing to 50 feet or more in height some days' journey down the Wadi Maseilah, they cannot [illegible] transported by

[1] The commoner Arabic name is *sidr*, *Rhamnus nab*[illegible]

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

342 passages connect the house with the lower portion as well as with the flat roof of the mosque. In the hot season the sunset and evening ritual prayers are always performed on the roof, and the *ʿālim* [1] sits here in the evenings, teaching the 556 recitation of the Koran to a circle of lads. A sayyid who has 782 made his fortune abroad will first build a mosque in his native 791 village and afterwards a big house for himself. For does he not owe the privileged position in his own country to religion, and to Allah's help the riches that he has successfully amassed in foreign lands? The abnormally large number of fine mosques in the poor country of Ḥaḍramaut is the result.

353 As in the other houses, the passages and stairs in Sayyid el-Bārr's house are plastered with light-brown mud mixed with finely chopped straw. The floor is always ribbed in a design of waving lines imprinted into the mud whilst it is wet. There are wooden pillars in the large rooms as there are no strong supporting beams for the construction of the roofs, which are always made of the split trunks of date-palms. The fibrous, brown stem of the tree is often plastered over with mud or covered with a wattle-work made of the split ribs of the leaves of the date-palm. Rust-red, black or white are the tasteful colours used in such wattle-work and, indeed, also on the layer of mud.

353 One usually enters the *madjlis* or reception-room by a door
● 352 in the middle of the shortest wall. On either side of the door there are great wooden chests, in which the sleeping-mattresses and pillows are hidden away during the day-time. These heavy, finely carved chests, decorated with tin-plated iron, are frequently the only ornament of the room. The window openings are small and close to the ground. In the houses of the rich, the wooden shutters and framework of the windows are carved. The floors are covered with simple mats of plaited palm-leaves over which the rich people lay carpets.

104 [1] *ʿĀlim* (عالم), a learned man, in this case, a man who thoroughly knows the religion.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Against the walls there are cushions on which to recline. The ugly modernity of mirrors fixed into the ceiling has been introduced into el-Bārr's house. Also, the old Ḥaḍramī colours of rust-red, black and white, which harmonize so well with the brown wood and with the lighter brown mud, have had some ugly new ones added to them.

In order to give pleasure to the family we take some more photographs of grown-ups and children. The household slaves and their jet-black children are with us in the *madjlis*; they serve round coffee and tea and many sweets, and talk with us, but nevertheless remain modestly in the background.

One can see from the many negro types in the streets and plantations that there are a great many slaves in Wādī Dō'an. They are employed for work on the land and as domestic servants.

In the afternoon we did what we could to treat a great number of patients, who came to us to ask for medicines or to have wounds and ulcers attended to. We could do little, however; and what, in any case, is the use of but one treatment? In all Ḥaḍramaut and its surroundings there is only one doctor with a western training. It is again the progressive Sayyid Abū Bakr el-Kāf who has got this young Indian doctor to come here, but his work lies in far-away Terīm. The rich go sometimes to Aden to consult a doctor, and the Mission Hospital at Shēkh 'Uthmān near Aden is also known to a few.

Towards evening I stroll with Sayyid 'Aluwī to Qāret Āl el-Miḥḍār, half an hour distant, where lives Sayyid Muṣṭafā bin Aḥmad el-Miḥḍār, to whom we have a letter from the Vizier at Makalla. Our reception is particularly friendly. The old sayyid has seen something of the world, and he compares life in Wādī Dō'an to sleep, which is something like death. I am urged to talk constantly and the atmosphere grows so friendly that he takes me with him to his other and larger house and shows me all over it, having first, with his own hands, shut in his young wives behind bolted doors and hung the keys on his belt. The wives take their revenge by having a good look at the stranger from the flat roof

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

The great cleanliness of the houses of the rich is very noticeable. The drainage from lavatories and kitchens runs down wide, square shafts into spaces destined for it in the lower floor, into which however, unfortunately, light penetrates so that they become good breeding places for flies. Bathrooms and also lavatories are partly fitted out as in the East Indies. Sometimes there are douches, and generally there are large brick cisterns for the bath water, which one scoops out to pour over oneself. Our host has a large refrigerator by means of which cold drinking-water is provided for the numerous guests and dwellers in the house, and fruits and sweetmeats become the refinement of pleasure.

Cooking in Terīm, as in Sēwūn, is very much influenced by Singapore and Java. Chinese cooks are responsible for the extensive rice meals that are enjoyed daily by dozens of guests. Many dried or tinned foods are imported from Java. Some kinds of vegetables are grown in the gardens of Terīm; the fresh fruits which are served at table are large oval melons and the first ripe dates. As the latter are rather scarce, last years' dates come to table prepared as paste, in cakes, sweet bread, etc.

Sayyid ʿUmar el-Kāf's house, like that of our host, is furnished in half-European style. Old-fashioned Indian rocking-chairs stand on the beautiful carpets. A bed, rigged up in the Javanese manner, decorates the great reception-room. The bed linen is not white, but pink. There are many mirrors on the walls and also photographs of the family's estates in the Indies. Sayyid ʿUmar is the owner of the great Europe Hotel in Singapore; he shows us with pride — and no wonder — the model of the new hotel, which makes an impression magnificently American. The walls are further decorated with Mausers and American repeating rifles, which are hard to obtain in this country and, consequently, are worth a great deal.

It had already struck us that the Kathīrī soldiers were better clad than those of the Qeʿēṭī. The number of pro-

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Hadhramaut MM2

sun-dried brick on a foundation of one or two stories of hewn stone, clay being used instead of mortar. The upper storeys are usually whitewashed on the exterior, and this practice gives the towns a striking and bright appearance when seen from a distance. The house is usually approached through a courtyard surrounded by a wall six feet or so in height. The entrance door is often very solid and ornamented with carvings in arabesque, or with iron nails or polished brass, and it usually carries a knocker. The door leads into a passage, with cellars and storerooms to right and left, and conducts to a courtyard at the back around which are the kitchen and other domestic offices; in the case of the larger houses, a private well is found here.

The building narrows and the walls become thinner at each succeeding storey; there is usually a balcony to each floor, on the right and left, surrounded by a low wall of masonry, but rarely covered in as is usual in most Mohammedan countries. The living and sleeping rooms of the upper storeys all have many windows, unglazed, but invariably shuttered. Fireplaces are unknown; when the weather is cold, the rooms are heated by a brazier of burning wood around which the occupants sit; wood which gives off as little smoke as possible is burnt, and what smoke there is escapes by the windows. All doors are closed from the inside by rough locks of wood or very exceptionally, of iron. The main doorway is closed by a huge wooden latch which can be raised by a cord leading to the story above, thus obviating the necessity of going downstairs to open it. The houses of the lower classes differ but little from those of most parts of Arabia. The Bedouins shelter themselves in caves or huts of clay; tents are never used by them as in most other parts of Arabia owing to the violent storms and general uncertainty of the weather prevalent at some seasons.

The so-called castles of the Hadhramaut are constructed in much the same fashion as the houses, only on a larger scale, some of them being of vast size and not infrequently covering an acre or more of ground. They have at the angles fortified towers (often furnished with antiquated mortars), either square or round, similar to those of mediaeval castles in Europe, and above the uppermost floor smaller square loopholed watch-towers or look-outs. There are often smaller isolated towers (*kūt*), little constructions of one or two floors, occupied by the guard. A raised terrace generally extends the whole length of the front of the building.

All the houses, even those of the rich, are furnished most sparely and simply. It is usual to sit on the floor, which is covered with

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Hadhramaut MM2

rugs or mats, or on cushions placed around or under the windows. A very low table, or a special circular mat, is put in the middle of the room for meals. Rough but solidly made coffers and cupboards are much used for clothes, silver, books, or domestic utensils. Lighting is by lamps of a very primitive form, which burn petroleum or, more commonly, sesame oil. The walls carry little or nothing of ornament, though the tribesmen sometimes adorn them with their arms, banners, or hunting equipment. A bathroom is usually found on each floor of a house, all being situated one above the other, the waste water running off by pipes through the wall; the apparatus consisting merely of a vessel from which water is poured over the body.

Wheaten or maize bread, dried dates, eggs, and meat (of sheep or poultry), taken in meagre amounts and usually in some form of soup or stew, form the staple foods; rice is not largely eaten; the people on the coast consume much fish; but only the Bedouin ever eat game. Butter, oil, and honey are much used; also spices, onions, and garlic, and much salad and green vegetables. Fruits, with the exception of the date, are considered as delicacies. Coffee is much drunk in the houses between meals, but there are no public cafés. It is customary for all persons paying visits to bring along with them some coffee-beans wrapped in the turban or plaid (*rādi*); when the party is complete these are collected by the host, and the coffee is prepared in the manner common to all the East. Before drinking, the name of Sheikh 'Ali ibn 'Omar esh-Shadhli, whose tomb is at Mocha, is invoked, he being reputed to have been the first to discover the stimulating properties of the berry.

Very few servants are kept in most houses, even in those of the well-to-do; the housework and cooking are done by the housewife and the daughters, with the aid, in case of stress, of help called in from other branches of the family, friends, or neighbours. Only the very rich have slaves, and these are treated more as members of the household than as property; for this reason slaves rarely desire to be freed. All slaves in the Hadhramaut are Moslems; even if they come from a Christian or pagan country, they are forced to embrace Islam. But marriage between free persons and slaves is extremely rare.

Dancing is regarded in the Hadhramaut as permissible, but never among persons of two sexes, and the Seyyids and townsmen usually abstain from it. The music is made by a primitive form of guitar (*qanbus*), a large oblong drum, and three or four small drums, the players often accompanying their music with